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# HORSEMANSHIP ASSESSMENT: INTRODUCTION

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The assessment tools you are about to work through with your leader will give you a better idea of where you are needing to work with your horse for the project year. Regardless of your age and experience, you should work through these tools from the start. New members and experienced riders alike should make certain that all the skills listed have been mastered.

The levels have been set up to ensure safety for the horse and rider and to build a strong foundation for your future in riding, wherever it may take you. One of the project goals is to ensure riders are safe and effective in groundwork and riding skills as well as knowledge of their horse and equipment used. Your love for horses and the skills you gain through your project work will be of great benefit to you for your whole life.

## **How to use your Assessment Checklists**

Keep your checklists up-to-date. Review each level with your leader to determine which skills you have already mastered and highlight the ones you are working on. Keep going back and reviewing the lists. This will be a useful tool to move you to the next level of Horsemanship. Happy riding!

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## LEVEL TWO: **DISMOUNTED SKILLS**

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- Explain, demonstrate and thoroughly groom your horse including cleaning at least two feet (Someone else may hold the feet).
- Demonstrate leading at the walk, trot, right turn, emergency left turn, halt and more fluid back up.
- Demonstrate how your horse moves sideways away from pressure by cueing with your hand while you are holding him.
- Identify at least six external parts of the horse.
- Explain where a horse's blind spots are and why it is important to know this.
- Show how to measure the height and weight of your horse.
- Demonstrate how to take your horse's heart rate and respiration rate and know what is normal.
- Describe three signs that indicate a horse is unhealthy.
- Explain how much and how often you feed your horse each day.
- Explain four feeding rules.
- Explain how a horse would use his body language to show that he is happy, angry, nervous and curious. Give two clues for each emotion.
- Describe three signs that other horses in your group may show if they are going to buck, bite, bolt or kick.
- Why does your horse want to return to the group?
- Identify any five colours and five markings that a horse may have.
- Name five breeds of horses.
- List three ways to keep your barn or pasture safe.
- List three things your horse's pen or pasture should have in it.

- Demonstrate with your own hands and feet the footfall sequence of the walk, jog/trot, lope/canter and back.
- Saddle and Bridle your horse. (Smaller members should be able to explain correct methods even if they are not able to do it entirely and may need some help).
- Identify five parts of the saddle and three parts of the bridle.
- While watching a horse being trotted, identify which diagonal the rider is on.
- While watching a horse being ridden at a lope/canter, recognize which lead the horse is on.
- Describe the cues you would give your horse to ask him to lope. Also describe the cues you would give to ask for the correct lead.

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## LEVEL TWO: MOUNTED SKILLS

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**To assess the rider levels:** Before you can assess, we must make sure that we are using a progressive format in lesson planning. That means the riding instructor should include a warm-up with each lesson and a review of previously taught skills so both rider and horse can progress. At every skill taught, we need to reinforce basic position, balance, suppleness, focus, timing and appropriate aids. We suggest that the individual skills be assessed first and only those who are successful at these skills be invited to ride the pattern. At all rider levels, the skills may be performed with two hands on the reins unless there is a reference to neck reining. Our preference would be that snaffle bits be used, but because safety is our number one concern, any humane bit may be used or refer to the standard set by your regional committee. To help the riders with pattern accuracy, please place  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{3}{4}$  markers down the sides of the riding area and one at the middle of each end.

- Warm-up** - While standing still, **flex** your horse's neck to turn his nose to 11, 10 and 9 o'clock and then 1, 2, and 3 o'clock. Do dismounted, then **mount** correctly and repeat the exercise.
- Do 3 arm and 3 leg **exercises** at a walk. Explain what the **2 point** position is. Demonstrate at least 6 steps of walking in a 2 point position (basic position with your seat raised off the saddle and your heels down).
- Show how you would use an **open rein** to circle down to an **emergency stop**. Show how you can use the same exercise without stopping to get your horse to follow his nose and give to the bit.
- Explain what a **direct rein** is. Use it to **demonstrate 3 turns** in each direction at arena markers at a walk and jog/trot. Explain what each of your hands and legs are doing.
- Explain what your horse should do if you apply 2 **direct reins**. What are the 3 aids to produce the **stop**. Demonstrate the aids in the correct order 3 times.
- Walk your horse forward 4 steps, **stop** using the correct aids, hesitate and **back** up 4 steps.
- Ride** the center **line (A-C)** and both diagonal lines of the arena at the walk and jog/trot. Try not to let you or your horse lean at either end of the diagonal lines.

- Ride a small (10 m) **circle** marked with cones at a walk, then a larger (20 m) circle marked with cones at a jog/trot. In both circles the horse's nose should be tipped slightly to the inside (11 and 1 o'clock). Go both directions. You can use an open or direct rein aid or both.
- Demonstrate a **jog/trot** all the way around the arena without clinging to your horse, breaking gait or bolting. Riders choosing to **post** should be rising on the correct **diagonal** and riders choosing to **sit** should demonstrate the **2 beat rhythm** by exaggerating the motion of their hips for at least ¼ of the ring.
- Explain what body parts are used to **post**. Explain why we post. Sit trot from marker 1 to marker 2 or 3 in a circle, then start to rise trot. Rise trot all the way around the circle. Do this 3 times in each direction. English riders should be on the **correct diagonal**. Western riders are encouraged to be.
- What is the rhythm of the **lope/canter**? What are the aids to lope/canter? Demonstrate a lope/canter for at least ten strides in each direction. Correct leads are encouraged but not required.
- Move from a **walk** to a **jog/trot** to a **lope/canter**, back to a jog/trot and then a walk in both directions of the arena. The rider should appear relaxed and comfortable. Do this as an individual and in a group.
- Demonstrate how to **safely move** to another area of the arena to **avoid crowding**.
- Show that you can **control** your horse by halting as the rest of the group rides on and then ride on while the rest of the group stops. Be prepared to do an **emergency stop** if your horse will not stand still.
- Ride the attached **pattern**. Include a **tack check**, correct **mount** and correct **dismount**. A mounting block (when mounting) or helper to hold your horse (when mounting or dismounting) may be used.

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## LEVEL TWO: PATTERN 2

Rider may have a reader for all patterns.

1. Mount near A.
2. Walk A-F-B.
3. Jog/trot B-M-C.
4. At C, jog/trot a large circle (20 m).
5. At C, lope/canter C-H-E-K-A.
6. At C, jog/trot A-F-X-H-C.
7. At C jog/trot a large circle.
8. At C lope/canter C-M-B-F-A.
9. At A jog/trot to K.
10. At K, walk to X.
11. Halt at X, back at least 4 steps.  
Dismount and lead out.

